

# Scaling Brief #2: Scaling Principles

This Scaling Brief was developed by CGIAR Science Leaders and scaling specialists to provide guidance for the design and implementation of scaling within the CGIAR (see **Brief #1** for more background information). The following principles build on established scaling

guidelines, and they can help to guide the design of the new CGIAR investments to enable sustainable impact at scale, but can also be applied in many other contexts. The Annex of **Brief #3** provides further information.



## 1. Pursue a shared vision of change

Reach a shared understanding with partners and other stakeholders about how they want agri-food systems and rural areas to be. Then agree on intended outcomes and impacts, e.g. for whom, where, when and with whom that vision can be achieved. Next, develop a shared understanding about what must be scaled by assessing the scalability of different innovations for various contexts and beneficiaries (see **Brief #3**). Determine how the scaling pathway and process must look if the intended changes are to be achieved in a sustainable and responsible manner. Recognise the fact that in dynamic situations, we can only make improvements and not permanent fixes. Available tools and approaches related to scaling and systems thinking help us to accommodate and integrate different perspec-

tives, unravel complexity, broaden options for action and identify leverage points (see **Brief #3**). All the solutions must be based on the needs of various stakeholders and on their practices, beliefs, aspirations and financial means. This will enable the solutions to be embedded in local systems after a project ends. However, you may have to deal with friction, conflict, disruption and consensus building among different stakeholder groups. Other requirements are: building on previous interventions, aligning with other initiatives and seeing your project as a piece of the puzzle that addresses parts of the system for a limited period of time – and while you move towards these goals, remember that your ultimate aim is to achieve the shared vision of change.



## 2. Be responsible in achieving the vision of change

Continuously assess whether or not the increased adoption of the innovation/outputs is resulting in positive outcomes and impacts and the desired synergies, but also be aware of unintended impacts, both positive and negative. Think about an optimal or an appropriate scale, rather than a maximum scale. Maximising the scale of the outputs may do more harm than good. For example, solar powered

irrigation may be beneficial for a farmer, but if it is applied at scale, the water may run out quickly if no accompanying rules and enforcement mechanisms are in place. Note that any scaling activity is likely to alter – or perpetuate – power relations and access to resources at different levels. This can have negative and unintended impacts on stakeholder groups, especially on the young, the elderly and women.



### 3. Design for scaling from the outset

Go beyond the boundaries of piloting to ascertain whether or not an innovation performs well and apply it in various usage scenarios and in different contexts. Environments in which innovations are tested are often only semi-controlled and therefore do not accurately reflect the reality at scale. This means embedding projects in local realities to ensure the continuation of the desired change does not depend on externally introduced incentives or unrealistic levels of capacity development. Pilot various modes of collaboration

and different strategies which can surmount barriers that hinder the attainment of the desired impact. This could mean working with innovative financing models, for example, developing capacity where it is lacking, addressing perverse incentives which work against integration of the innovation in local contexts. CGIAR should invest in the science of scaling (see the Annex of **Brief #3** as part of this design process – this will improve the practice of scaling and enhance impacts.



### 4. Nurture local ownership and leadership

Engage capable and motivated local actors for the design, implementation and evaluation of the projects. The CGIAR can play an important role in facilitating and catalysing local change; ultimately, however, only local private and public sector partners can grow and sustain the impact at scale. It is therefore important to decide (together with different beneficiaries, partners and/or other persons affected by the innovation) whether or not the achieved changes are “good”. Perform a critical appraisal of the incentives which enable (or discourage) different groups of stakeholders to support (or not support) the scaling process beyond the project. Support local capacity to innovate,

collaborate and scale – this will enable local actors to lead change process. Build on – and leverage – local movements for change, and design the intervention to meet local stakeholder needs. Be sure to consider how a broadly adopted innovation will affect different groups in different ways – and make sure that the most vulnerable will never be worse off. Engaging with those in power can help you understand why they may wish to drive or block a scaling process, and it can lead to a dialogue that may find common agreement between groups. This approach also includes being aware of our own (perhaps biased) opinions that drive us and influence our decisions.



### 5. Launch, learn and adjust

Avoid “paralysis by analysis”, embrace complexity and regard scaling as an both an art and a science. Identify investable scaling projects by applying transparent and broadly accepted processes. Launch, learn and adjust. Use the principles and the ultimate vision for change as a compass to point you in the right direction. Learn from the change process itself, both with and for local actors. Go beyond adoption studies and use metrics and monitoring methods, which create a general feeling of confidence that changes are indeed happening, or that they are likely to happen, within or beyond the project boundaries (space and time).

Use dynamic evaluation methods during the scaling process to understand how both intended and unintended impacts change as scaling proceeds. In addition, critically assess whether or not the scaling vision and the pathway towards the desired outcome are still appropriate, since the contexts are always dynamic. Keep the scaling plan simple, remain flexible and have the courage to change your course or even perform a U-turn based on what you learn during implementation. A growing number of scaling approaches and tools is available to support these processes (**Brief #3**).

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